MOKO

No 3

A SERIOUS REVIEW

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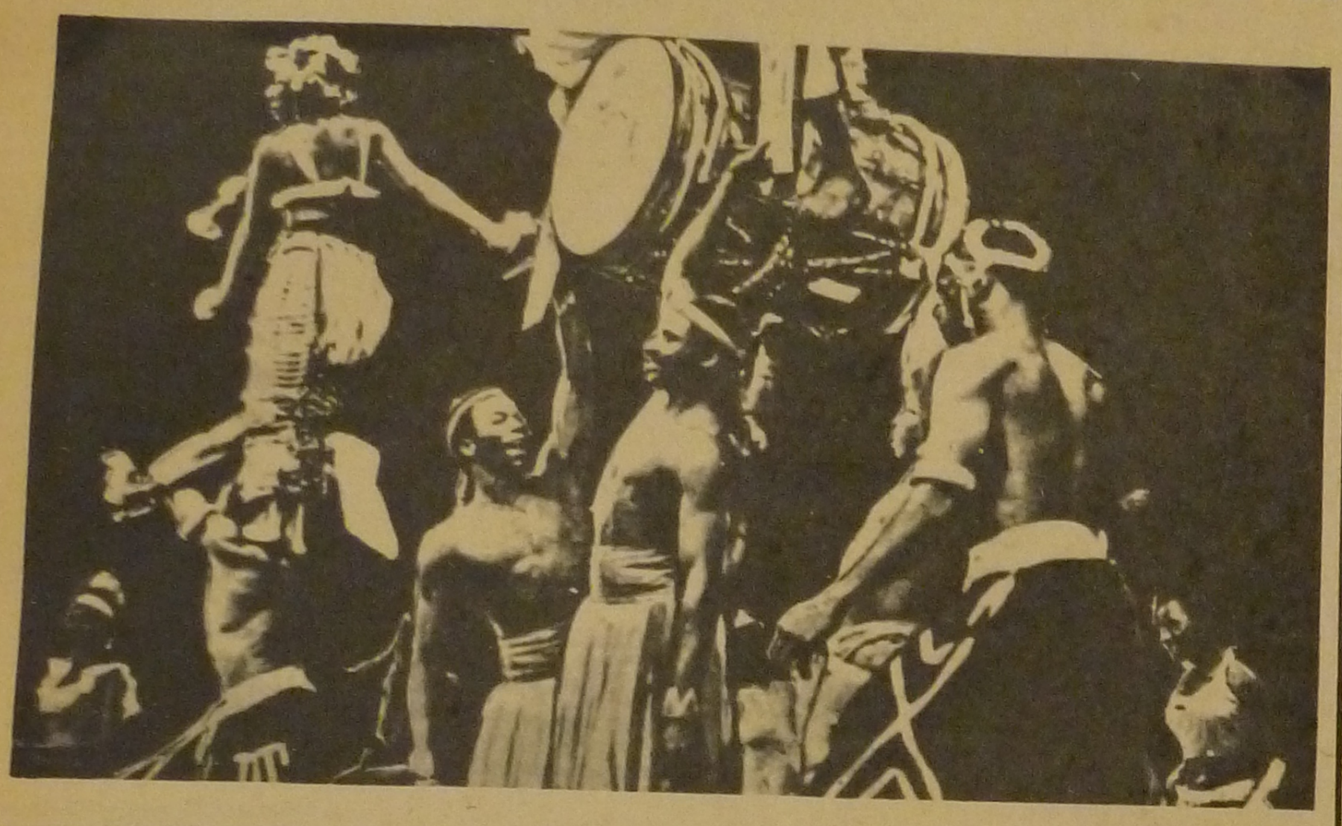
LES BALLETS AFRICAINS



CULTURAL DILEMMA

By GORDON ROHLEHR

The arrival of the African Ballet is an event which is eagerly anticipated in Trinidad and the rest of the West Indies, and with good reason. Our warped consciousness is nowhere more evident than in the image of Africa which we sometimes project in local dance. An "African" dance in Trinidad is normally an excuse for showing how thoroughly we have accepted the notion that the African is a walking sexual symbol. We joyfully acquiesce in self-denigration by seeing ourselves as Europeans have seen us. This attitude to Africa is thus part of the deeper illness of our approach to the whole question of blackness in the West Indies.

JAMAICA PANTOMIME

It was most revealing, for example, to watch the Jamaica Pantomime earlier this year, and to see the image of themselves which middle-class Jamaicans chose to project on the stage. The Pantomime was based, as it normally is, on folk-lore and folk music, and depended heavily on the vitality of lower-class Jamaican speech, and on the perennial brilliance of Louise Bennett and Ranny Williams, both of whom exploit local dialect and humour.

An easy irony was achieved by showing a confrontation between a black Jamaican,an American tourist a Peace Corps worker, and a colour-prejudiced planter-type Jamaican white. The whites were all seen as idiots who can't understand the people or partake of their "natural" vitality. This stereotype contrast between black liveliness and white sterility was indicated by differences of accent; "black" accents suggested richness of life and spontoneity; "white" accents stupidity and death-in-life. In Trinidad a calypso like Kitchener's "Miss Tourist" makes a similar point in a more sophisticated and less self-conscious fashion.

The Pantomime this year was clearly conceived in the self-contempt that subscribes to the myth of the happy negro,and in the blindness which regards folk forms and idioms as amenable solely to humour. Jamaican folksongs were used only when a broadly "folksy" atmosphere was required, while songs from an American show like "The West Side Story" were used whenever there was need to express love and tenderness. As Derek Walcott puts it, "Venus lives with the aristocrats". Not even the combined talents of Cassidy, Le Page and Jean Da Costa, all distinguished students of Jamaican speech, can account for the incredible accents of the hero and heroine, who depicted middle-class types. They weren't speaking a Jamaican version of standard English, but attempting to speak "good" English, and invented accents for the occasion. Their phoniness was felt by the audience who were honest enough not to applaud or boo them. Their performance could evoke no response and deserved none.

SELF–CONTEMPT

Here then we have an example of a people which can at one and the same time mock at whiteness, and strive to achieve it, celebrate black vitality and show an essential scorn for blackness. Underlying the entire Pantomime was the well-educated hypocrisy which enables the middle-class simultaneously to ape and scorn the illiterate masses, who they feel have a life and wholeness which they themselves have lost

A country whose educated classes have developed such a deep-rooted self-contempt and ambivalence, passively accepts the Government's ban on all the writings of black leaders like Carmichael, Malcolm X, Brown and Fanon. At the same time they regard Gordon, Bogle and Garvey as national Heroes. They speak of human rights in the United Nations, protest at white exploitation of black people, and return home to malign and make scapegoats of the Rastafari Brethren. They give a posthumous Human Rights Award to Dr. Martin Luther King while they object to the methods of peaceful demonstration and civil disobedience which King when living, practised and perfected.

AFRICAN CULTURE

Because they lack self-respect they do justice neither to their African nor to their European heritage. Hence African culture means a song and dance, and has for them no organic connection with the new sense of beauty grace and dignity which is sweeping through the black world, or with the struggles of deracinated blacks in America and the West Indies to achieve similar stature.

Now we welcome the Guinea dancers to Trinidad. We need them badly, only if to correct the notion that what we see on our stage has anything to do with Africa. Perhaps a vision of blacks who are themselves and have no need to assert identity because they are whole and creative, can help to heal our sickness of self-contempt and sterility. I doubt it though. At the end of it all, we'll have had the experience and missed the meaning.

EXIT NORMAN

By JAMES MILLETTE

Slowly but surely a political generation fades away. Mr. Norman Manley, for thirty years President and Political Leader of the People's National Party of Jamaica, recently delivered his final presidential address to the annual Party conference and announced his intention to relinquish the leadership in the new year.

In a long and rambling speech he tried gamely and with some effect to vindicate the role his Party has played in the political development of Jamaica and, in the process, said some very interesting things. Indeed, it is long now since as comprehensive a condemnation of the existing political situation in Jamaica has been delivered from such a knowledgeable source. Much of what he had to say was very much to the point, particularly in the light of recent events. For example, his lament on the decline of the national spirit over the last few years was very timely. So, too, were his strictures on the increase of organised political hooliganism and the sharp development of what he chose to call "a two-level economy in which one saw the growth of poverty and lack of opportunity in one sector, and greater luxury and opportunities in the other."

Much more startling though for a politician of his age and outlook was his ungrudging approbation of the sentiment of Black Power and his realisation of the historical circumstances of its development. In a speech which was in some other senses naive he managed to make some very insightful comments on the question of Black Power and its relationship to Jamaican society. One of these linked the apprehensions currently expressed about Black Power with a stream of West Indian thought which was similarly fearful, in and around 1938, of giving black West Indians adult suffrage and of seeking for them ultimate self-government and independence. In his view, to be frightened by the prospect of Black Power, or blindly to seek to ignore it, is to react unreasonably to a development which has grown directly out of the existing West Indian situation. Call it Black Power, or call it what you will, the profound malaise of the West Indian society has developed out of a political and economic dilemna which Mr. Manley has known from the inside.

THE NAKED TRUTH

The Jamaican problem as he has described it is well known to all of us. To quote Mr. Manley, it is the problem of "a nation with Black Power in political affairs" confronted by the harsh facts of economic life which force it to accept more than it needs to "money and opportunity for growth from countries where white power prevails, so that as our country grows there is refelcted here the continued existence of power from abroad and the continued denial of power in our own land, economic power."

But Mr. Manley's analysis is only partially true. There are no vast, impersonal forces constraining Jamaica any or other West Indian country to accept as given the continued dependence of these territories. The solution lies in our hands. The main difficulty so far has been to isolate the problem. What Mr. Manley has now said the "young radicals" have been saying for years. But forget the young radicals; if Mr. Manley could see thepoint there is yet hope. Now we have to work towards the solution.

HISTORICAL ASSESSMENT

As he prepares to leave the political arena Mr. Manley, at the ebb of his political fortunes has also tried to secure his place in history with the claim that he has fulfilled his historic mission which was to win self-government for Jamaica, "to win political power, which is the final power,for the black masses of my country from which I spring." Whatever his claims in internal Jamaican politics his standing in the West Indies is, however, inextricably linked with his role in the late, lamented West Indian Federation. The measure of that standing lies in the fact that it requires an effort of will to remember that this forlorn political figure, groping his way off the stage of history, was, a little over ten years ago, on the threshold of an immortal political desitny. Mr. Manley himself has helped to kill the memory. Today, he is casual, even bitter, about Federation. That road had been for him the most painful of all, a veritable path of pain, and it is clear that the experience still rankles. As he told the conference, Federation had been for the PNP nothing but a disastrous diversion the more regrettable because it had led to the "harmful and dangerous exploitation of the idea that freedom for Jamaica was born of the J.L.P."

One can sympathise with Mr. Manley but his bed has been completely of his own making. Undoubtedly his most fateful decision throughout his long political life was his decision not to go to the Federation. The second was to compound the earlier error by com-

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GUYANA: WHAT PROSPECT?

The Caribbean people have given notice that they are ready to break out of the strangle-hold of a colonial economy upon which the whole superstructure of our society is built. It is the colonial character, both in politics and economics, of Caribbean society that creates severe conflicts and antagonisms between the population, on the one hand, and the social system maintained by the local middle class, on the other. Whereas the activities and aspirations of the Caribbean people whose that we are a modern people with the readiness and capacity to master ourselves and our environment, given the opportunity, the economic and political system which weighs heavily upon us comprises an antiquated system to be broken-up, destroyed and thrown on the dump heap. Most economic and political systems thrive on the existence of a single, predominant, social class. The colonial system in its present form is kept alive by the local middle class strongly backed and supported by huge foreign financial and industrial interests. We have to look not on the superficial surface, but to dig deep into the sub-soil to find the roots of the problem of underdevelopment.

THE 1953 ERA

Geographically, Guyana is part of the South American Continent. But socially, culturally, politically and economically it is an integral part of the Caribbean.

The experience of the Guyanese people within recent years has been one of expectations, betrayal, corruption and violence. In 1953 the People's Progressive Party came to power amid "great expectations." The two major races in the country were united behind a political party that gave some hope, not for a new government with new local faces, but for a new way of life. A new way of life meant, and still means, that the old colonial economy must go.

The People's Progressive Party (PPP) under the leadership of Dr. Cheddi Jagan inherited an economy and a state apparatus that was created by the colonial powers for their own economic interests. The objective economic situation was as follows: all the major banks and financial institutions were foreign owned and controlled; all the major industries were foreign owned and controlled. Monetary and trading policies were foreign controlled. The information media were dominated by foreign ideas and values. The task then was to mobilize the population of Guyana to begin the total reorganisation of the economy. That was first and foremost. The mobilization of the population meant, and still means, not only acquiring mass political support, but, most important, mass political organisation of the people in every part of the country and in every department of the national life. Further, the mass movement required a political philosophy, and a policy and program around which the movement could be consolidated and built. This meant that the philosophy, the policy and the program had to evolve and develop as the mass movement grew stronger. Without this the task of national construction was utterly impossible.

PARTY SPLIT

Instead of undertaking this tremendous task, for tremendous it was, the party leadership began a squabble over who should lead. A split occured within the party over the question of leadership with all the subsequent racial divisions which are now so familiar. The two "new" parties, although having mass support (on racial lines), had no serious political philosophy constructed to deal with the objective situation in Guyana. What resulted then was racism, not politics.

C.L.R. James in The Black Jacobins has stated the " . . . . The race question is subisdiary to the class question in politics . . . but to neglect the racial factor as merely incidental is an error only less grave than to make it fundamental." To add to this we can say that in the absence of serious politics the tendency in the Caribbean and in many parts of themodern world is for the race question to dominate the political scene. That is the crux of the Guyanese political problem – all race and no politics. Having failed to tackle the economic mess and to place politics on a firm mass basis, both major political parties – the PPP and the PNC have had to resort to the politics of race. And the colonial powers seeing an opportunity further to exploit the natural and human resources of the country to their economic benefit assisted, as they would always do, in splitting the country even more. The West plays with the PNC while the East plays with the PPP. While Dr. Jagan talks about "Socialism", and "Marxist - Leninism ", Mr. Burnham talks about "Guyanization", " decolonization" and "stability". Nobody knows what these phrases mean because they are meaningless. The only interpretation that seems to make sense is that one means Moscow and the other means Washington. Behind the scenes, one says "Indian must rule" while the other says "Negro must rule."

THE POLITICS OF RACE

The entire history of the Caribbean people from our birth to the present day has been dominated by a type of politics that can only be described as colonial, both in theory and practice. While the colonial powers play one group against another in an atetmpt to dominate the economic, and as a consequence the political life of the country, the local groups play with the colonial powers in their bid for political power. In cases where the two major parties are of almost equal strength, other smaller parties emerge and align themselves from time to time with one of the major parties in keeping with their (the smaller parties) subjective interests, or a dictatorship results. The political events in Guyana since 1953 demonstrate the former pattern in grand colonial style (the possibility of the latter stares us in the face today).

With the split in the PPP and the consolidation of racial politics, a number of smaller party groupings emerged, the most important one being the United Force (UF) led by Mr. Peter D'Aguiar. It was clear that the UF was formed as the "party of private enterprise," to hold the balance of power in a racially torn society threatened by the "spectre of communism". As the political events developed it became clearer that the only possible means ("democratic" means) of capturing the governmental apparatus from the "Communist" PPP was by a coalition government comprising the PNC and the UF. But this required some electoral juggling.

The events that followed are well known. Burnham proposed Proportional Representation (PR). Dr. Jagan stood by the "first past the post" principle. D'Aguiar stood somewhere in-between, but he made it quite clear that he was leaning towards Burnham's proposal. After a verbal war at the top and a violent war at the bottom, the political bosses decided to let the colonial office decide – colonial politics to the letter. The intrigues, scandals, manoeuveringand lies that were involved in justifying the final decision are now known. The Colonial Office decided that PR was best for the Guyanese people.

Following the national elections under the new system, the PNC and the UF formed a coalition government under the Prime Ministership of Mr. Forbes Burnham and Guyana acheived independence. But political leaders that practice colonial politics cannot suddenly change direction. Colonial politics is a disease. Once it gets a suitable feeding ground it spreads and extends its tentacles over those nearest to where it feeds and breeds. The Coalition government began to totter. D'Aguiar decided he was not getting his fair share of governmental power. Parliamentarians crossed from one party to the other. D'Aguiar accused the PNC of mismanaging governmental affairs, of maladministration, of dictatorial government practices and of bribing his party members in the house with cabinet posts in order to undermine the coalition government and weaken his party (all probably true). Ultimately with little support left, he resigned

BREAK-UP OF COALITION

We have to ask what serious programatic point was involved? None. What important policy-statement precipitated the split? None. The same issue that created the split within the PPP now created a split not only in the coalition government, but in the UF. What issue? Political power to masquerade in government for subjective interests. While the PNC and the UF were playing at politics, the leadership of the PPP was whining to Eastern and Western capitals complaining about the C.I.A's intrigues in Guyana. Democracy is a philosophy, a way of life of a people. Politics is mass activity. Democratic politics and Democratic government can only have meaning in the context of mass involvement, mass participation in the common affairs of state and country. Without this, mismanagement, corruption, bribery, tomfoolery, political tricks and gimmicks must be the prevailing mode of practice in party, government and society.

Today, corruption is rumoured to be rampant in all departments of government administration. Civil service officials have been complaining of appointments to government positions based on support for the ruling party rather than on merit and ability. The topic of discussion on street corners, in bass, at places of work and in homes is the "rigged elections." It is alleged that people who are not even Guyanese are being asked to sign the voters' registration list, in certain metropolitan cities. Whether all this is true or not is not important. What is important is this: Any party that takes over a colonial state machinery and a colonial economy and does not attempt to break-up both and replace them with new and innovative systems in which the population provides the fundamental driving force is doomed to end its days in corruption and mismanagement. The governing party will attempt to fool the people with speeches, cabinet reshuffles, rituals and accusations directed against other parties and personalities. But a people can be fooled for so long and no longer. They learn by their own social experiences.

BOTH SIDES TO BLAME

It is not that the political leadership consists of bad people. It is that the political and economic system is outmoded. The political leaders do not make the system corrupt. It is the system that corrupts the political leaders and those around them. Without a new political philosophy and a new policy and program based on the dialects of historical development of the world in general and of the local situation in particular, and directed to the upliftment of the whole population, materially, intellectually and morally, political parties and political leaders will only lead the people further down the gutter to crises, poverty and ruin. The very political system they practice dictates that they utilize all means at their disposal to remain in power even if it means shooting the population. Where governmental practice equals corruption and party politics is equivalent to colonial politics, government and opposition together stand condemned.

TRADITION OF VIOLENCE

What can we expect after Dec. 16 faced with an objective situation where a modern people is being kept in a state of backwardness by a class which maintains an outmoded colonial system? Before we answer this question we must ask there basic questions.

What action has the population taken?
What has the government done?
What do the parties propose to do?

Guyana has had a tradition of violence dating back to the era of slavery. From the Berbice Slave Rebellion of 1763, the 1808 slave revolt, the 1823 East Coast Insurrection, the 1834 general strike on the Essequibo West Coast to the riots of since 1953, Guyana has experienced more violent outbursts than perhaps any other West Indian territory. Within the last few months "wildcat - strikes" by workers and farmers took place in the sugar industry and in many service industries in Georgetown. Even the security police went on strike. The bauxite industry has been plagued by a series of general strikes in the last five years that neither government nor union was able to avert. Further, there are the popular "choke and rob" groups that roam the streets of Georgetown. It should be clear that social unrest and violence is an inherent aspect of Guyanese society.

Whereas the slave rebellions were organised against the plantation owners, the riots of recent years contain a racial trust. The conflicts between the East Indians - and Negroes date from the post-emancipation period. These conflicts were not political but mainly economic. Today, as a result of the politics of race practiced by the major political parties, the absence of any serious political philosophy and the fear of the people

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There are many reasons ... need not examine them all here, ... with the articulation of ideas, ... so, UWI's regionalism has not ... A formal structure, yes; the ... of students and lecturers, yes; ... interest, the pressure of the ... a number of cases showing ... ford, Davis – all victims of a ... – had elicited no unified ...

It was the development of ... hope for what was beginning to ... phenomena unprecedented in ...

First, the remarkably ... even on the university of ... which these protests created an ... West Indian regionalism. ... necessarily identified with ... very terms of the university's ... its academic staff should be ... could at best be a terminological ... students revolted almost ... seemed likely that the U.W.I. ... of the West Indies – that is, ...

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"We have no reason to be ... have no grounds for dismissing ... ber 16. Further, he went on to ... Dr. Rodney remained a member ...

"As soon as we know where ... staff to meet him with to discuss ... continues to be a member of the ...

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What made a significant ... made these assertions as public ... of the U.W.I. administration had ... What led some of us to rest so much ... the fact that they seemed to ... administration to the Jamaican ... saw the University administration ... demic integrity, and the Vice-Chan... (to the extent of his being denounced ... to meld completely with the anger ...

On these signs many of us ... at last been born, after a long ... publicized developments of the ... doubt, and it is now the melancholy ... infant has not been killed, strangled ... whether our faith had not been misplaced.

"Speculate" is the right word ... developments of the past fortnight ... tery. The central one is the fact ... terminated on Friday, November ... compensation. Beyond this ... who took the decision to terminate ... was taken. Two conflicting versions ... University's Appointments Committee ... Purposes Committee, on the other ...

This confusion as to the source ... Committee is the normally competent ... General Purposes Committee is the ... with soem political representation, ... Committee rather than to the Appointments ... that the case has been treated as one ... the Jamaican Government in banning ... carrying out the terms of his contract ... response of the University administration ... rather than strictly academic – a ... Mr. Sherlock's statements of October ...

These two implications are ... tration of contract" notion itself ... academic viewpoint, the case of Marshall ... in 1968; botn men were declared ... But in the earlier case Mandle was ... Hill campus in Barbados. There is ... modation has been offered to Rodney ... animus of political insularity has ... who appear to have taken the easy ... for good and all.

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Back Page

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The Rodney zaffeh — as it seems increasingly appropriate to call it — has been a generally ugly business from which, so far, it has perhaps been possible to slavage a single element of hope. When this scandal of Caribbean politics burst in Jamaica last October, as the latest in a series of incidents demonstrating the powerful divisive forces of West Indian society, some of us found it possible to take heart from the reflection that here, at least, was a case presenting a clear-cut issue.

This issue was not, of course, what the politicians-in-power or the vested interests made it out to be — not the issue of the violent "communist" plotting to overthrow a stable government by force. The issue that some of us saw, emerging for the first time on fairly well-defined lines, was that of direct confrontation between insular politics and the regionalism of which the U.W.I. is unquestionably the principal embodiment in the Caribbean.

There are many reasons why the U.W.I. should logically hold this position; we need not examine them all here, but as an intellectual institution by definition concerned with the articulation of ideas, its regionalism has tended to be particularly vocal. Even so, UWI's regionalism has not always been a full-bodied or wholly self-conscious one. A formal structure, yes; the rather careless assumption of an interregional community of students and lecturers, yes; but as often as not undermined by apathy, narrow self-interest, the pressure of the divisive forces from outside. Before Rodney, there had been a number of cases showing these forces at work, but the cases of Taylor, Mandle, Beckford, Davis — all victims of a traditional tendency to xenophobia by Jamaican regimes — had elicited no unified response from the U.W.I.

It was the development of such a response in Rodney's case that gave some of us hope for what was beginning to look like a lame-duck institution: in particular two phenomena unprecedented in the history of the university.

First, the remarkably spontaneous revolt of students on all three campuses — and even on the university of Guyana campus. What was significant here was the way in which these protests created an intimate fusion of the themes of academic integrity and West Indian regionalism. Academic freedom at an institution such as U.W.I. was seen as necessarily identified with regionalism . which of course follows logically from the very terms of the university's constitution. A U.W.I. denied the right to decide where its academic staff should be posted could be neither West Indian nor a University; it could at best be a terminological mockery like Voltaire's Holy Roman Empire. The students revolted almost unanimously against such a mockery, and for the first time it seemed likely that the U.W.I. was at last awakening fully to its identity of a University of the West Indies — that is, an institution of higher learning regional in its scope.

The second basis of hope, equally unprecedented, was the series of forthright and unequivocal statements made by the Vice-Chancellor, Mr. Sherlock, in Jamaica within a few days of Rodney's banning. Here, for the first time, the Head of the University Administration had come out clearly in support of the principle of academic integrity and these statements were so fundamental to the optimistic outlook that they are worth repeating.

"We have no reason to be dissatisfied with Dr. Rodney's academic work, and so we have no grounds for dismissing him," Mr. Sherlock said at a press Conference on October 16. Further, he went on to assert that, as far as the University was concerned, Dr. Rodney remained a member of staff and would continue to be treated as such.

"As soon as we know where he is, I will try to arrange for a senior member of our staff to meet him with to discuss the whole matter and to make it clear to him that he continues to be a member of the University staff."

In point of cold fact, what these statements proclaim amounts to no more than what the university had indeed been practising in the earlier cases mentioned. As a correspondent, from Jamaica, notes, Taylor, Beckford, Mandle and Davis have all been accommodated by the University, in spite of Jamaican government action against them.

What made a significant difference in this case was the fact that Mr. Sherlock made these assertions as public statements. In the past, we knew, the general policy of the U.W.I. administration had been public acquiescence andprivate negotiation. What led some of us to rest so much hope on Mr. Sherlock's proclamation was precisely the fact that they seemed to constitute the first direct challenge issued by the UWI administration to the Jamaican government's policy of insularity. For the first time we saw the University administration coming out with an assertion of the principle of academic integrity, and the Vice-Chancellor public defiance of the Jamaican government (to the extent of his being denounced in the Jamaican House of Representatives, seemed to meld completely with the anger and sense of betrayal of the students themselves.

On these signs many of us based our hope that a University of the West Indies had at last been born, after a long gestation of some 20 years. Some curiously underpublicized developments of the last fortnight have again thrown the whole issue in doubt, and it is now the melancholy duty of MOKO to speculate as to whether this infant has not been killed, strangled at birth by its own parents; or even, indeed, whether our faith had not been misplaced in the first place.

"Speculate" is the right word here, because not the least disturbing aspect of these developments of the past fortnight is that they remain surrounded by silence and mystery. The central one is the fact that Dr. Rodney's contract as University lecturer was terminated on Friday, November 8th. with an award of six months' salary by way of compensation. Beyond this information we know very little. We are not informed who took the decision to terminate Rodney's contract, or on what ground this decision was taken. Two conflicting versions of the story attribute the decision variously to the University's Appointments Committee on the one hand, and to its Finance and General Purposes Committee, on the other.

This confusion as to the source of the decision is significant. The Appointments Committee is the normally competent authority for these matters: the Finance and General Purposes Committee is the University Council acting in a special capacity, and with soem political representation, and the relegation of a decision in this case to this Committee rather than to the Appointments Committee suggests two things: — First, that the case has been treated as one of "frustration of contract" in that the action of the Jamaican Government in banning him has effectively prevented Dr. Rodney from carrying out the terms of his contract to teach at Mona; and — second, that the total response of the University administration to the banning of Dr. Rodney has been political rather than strictly academic — a complete face-about from the stand indicated by Mr. Sherlock's statements of October 16.

These two implications are, moreover, interrelated, in the sense that the "frustration of contract" notion itself looks like a political evasion. From the purely academic viewpoint, the case of Mandle in 1966 was exactly the same as that of Rodney in 1968; botn men were declared undesirable and deported by the Jamaican government But in the earlier case Mandle was immediately offered an alternative place at the Cave Hill campus in Barbados. There is no public evidence that any such alternative accommodation has been offered to Rodney, and we are left to infer that in this case the animus of political insularity has proved too much for the University administration who appear to have taken the easy way out by deciding to shake-off the Rodney bogey for good and all.

At existing

To blame Dr. Rodney for the recent riot in Kingston, Jamaica, is as stupid as it is dangerous. It is stupid because it ignores and contradicts the knowledge we have about the causes of riots . . . It is dangerous because, though it may temporarily distract attention from the more likely causes, it prevents us also from paying due attention to them. Thus it reduces the possibility of finding solutions to them. The danger is, that if the deepseated issues are ignored, (even if in ostrich-like fashion with the resulting lack of possible real solutions) there are likely to be not only more but worse riots.

The researchers who have studied mob activity have all found that such activity usually functions "as a social mechanism for the expression of discontents on the part of under-privileged groups (especially) in terms of economic hardship". Numerous observers of the Jamaican social scene have testified (often by descriptions that would touch the most hardened social conscience), to the most appaling social and economic conditions under which so many Jamaicans exist. It may appear surprising,therefore, to those who know of these conditions, that Jamaica's political leaders could be so brash as to claim that Dr. Rodney was the author and instigator of an already existing explosive situation. At first sight, it may appear even more astonishing that those leaders should attempt to shift the blame for Jamaica's internal social problems on to the shoulders of non-rationals. Such an accusation may even appear very disconcerting and inconsistent to non-Jamaicans and even to some Jamaican West Indians knowing as they do that the accused non-Jamaicans are mainly West Indians, and that the Jamaican leaders are, overtly at least, supporti
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BIAFRA
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TRAGE

By KENNEDY LINDSAY

The struggle between Biafra and Federal Nigeria brings to mind the "Protestant wind" which thwarted some of the best laid plans of France in her wars with England. Time after time, when success should have gone to Biafra, fate intervened and deprived her of it.

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THE RODNEY AFFAIR

A Social-psychological perspective

By ANDREW G.J. CAMACHO

To blame Dr. Rodney for the recent riot in Kingston, Jamaica, is as stupid as it is dangerous. It is stupid because it ignores and contradicts the knowledge we have about the causes of riots . . . It is dangerous because, though it may temporarily distract attention from the more likely causes, it prevents us also from paying due attention to them. Thus it reduces the possibility of finding solutions to them. The danger is, that if the deepseated issues are ignored, (even if in ostrich-like fashion with the resulting lack of possible real solutions) there are likely to be not only more but worse riots.

The researchers who have studied mob activity have all found that such activity usually functions "as a social mechanism for the expression of discontents on the part of under-privileged groups (especially) in terms of economic hardship". Numerous observers of the Jamaican social scene have testified (often by descriptions that would touch the most hardened social conscience), to the most appaling social and economic conditions under which so many Jamaicans exist. It may appear surprising,therefore, to those who know of these conditions, that Jamaica's political leaders could be so brash as to claim that Dr. Rodney was the author and instigator of an already existing explosive situation. At first sight, it may appear even more astonishing that those leaders should attempt to shift the blame for Jamaica's internal social problems on to the shoulders of non-rationals. Such an accusation may even appear very disconcerting and inconsistent to non-Jamaicans and even to some Jamaican West Indians knowing as they do that the accused non-Jamaicans are mainly West Indians, and that the Jamaican leaders are, overtly at least, supporting West Indian collaboration.

Yet, although the Jamaican leaders may choose to ignore, or may be ignoring, the "social facts" of mob activity, they do this at their long term peril. The same may be said of their attempt to increase internal cohesion by creating conflict with resident non-nationals. The need to increase, or perhaps more accurately in the Jamaican case to create, such cohesion becomes more pressing when the society is threatened with disintegration at that . . . As George Simmel has pointed out even "war with the outside is sometimes the last chance for a state ridden with inner antagonisms to overcome these antagonisms, or else to break up definitely".

SOCIAL FACT

We can find many historical examples of the intuitive recognition of this "social fact" by "establishments" and governments, especially dictatorships and oligarchies but including even those which were initially chosen by popular vote. Hitler's invasions of Czechslovakia, Poland, and Austria, probably had the objective of uniting the German people in the face of the "enemy". It is not at all unlikely that the recent Russian invasion of Czechoslovakia and the continuing Venezuelan preoccupation with the "Guyana problem" may have been at least partly motivated by a similar intention to establish or increase internal solidarity by creating external distractions.

The reverse situation may be noted in the United States-Vietman conflict. Here American involvement in Vietnam has become a cause of internal dissension in the United States. Hence we find that that country is trying to extricate itself from a situation that is not contributing to internal cohesion. This latter situation also illustrates the point, as does the experience of the Nazis, that the creation of external conflict in order to achieve national solidarity is at best a temporary expedient with only short-term benefits which may lead to a greater national disaster than was at first threatened. Of course, it may be argued from hind-sight that some national disaster is necessary before important desirable social changes can be effected. But one wonders whether the new "threats" which are created (for example, the possible proliferation of "enemies", as in the case of Nazi Germany, who can unite into a "common enemy" and the possible social, economic, and political isolation of the "enemy-creating" government or country may not eventually produce a situation which may be even more threatening than the original one.

U.S. SUPPORT DOUBTFUL

Jamaica may feel that she has the economic and military support of the United States and thus may not care if she becomes isolated from the rest of the West Indies.But it is at least necessary to consider what changes in American foreign policy will take place if, or rather more realistically when, Cuba ceases to be considered as a threat to the security of the United States. For example, would Jamaica continue to receive the same amount of economic and military support? In addition, one might ask whether American support in any imaginable quantity will alone be sufficient to prevent internal disintegration? If internal disintegration ensues can the Jamaican government count on the Americans to intervene in Jamaica as they have done in Vietnam or in the Dominican Republic? We suspect that the American Government will not be too anxious or willing to do so.

NO RETURN

Of course it is possible that the course of events may have advanced too far for the Jamaican leadership to retrace its steps. They may feel impelled to pursue their present course of action, even though that action may inexorably lead, unless averted or checked by other groups or events, to almost certain disaster. Experience has shown that when a group has attained power by force or other means defined as illegitimate or illegal, it will immediately take all steps to see that no other group can do likewise and will define any such attempts as rebellious, traitorous, or illegal. This is not the case with the Jamaican government. Yet, it may be that having secured control of the instruments of power it is now overly reluctant to relinquish them.

All of this is of course understandable. One can understand and accept the need of a government to maintain and defend its position. But one must reject the accusation that any group of persons who attempt to change or to overthrow that government even by force must OF NECESSITY be fools, hooligans, or traitors. These persons may indeed be the TRUE nationalists. This is not to say that riots or rebellions should be encouraged or even that violence in any form is ever the best way to achieve desirable social change. But it means that, as is stated in the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights, "It is essential, if man is not to be compelled to have recourse, as a last resort, to rebellion against tyranny and oppression, that human rights should be protected by the rule of law". It means that when there is tyranny, oppression, or serious and general social injustice, one should not be surprised if resort is had to violence. The American Revolution demanding "No taxation without representation" and the French Revolution demanding "Liberty, Equality, and Brotherhood" were the violent ancestors of two of todays respectable, "democratic" states.

In summary, what we are trying to claim is that riot and rebellion are more often consequences and not causes of social disintegration. While it may be temporarily expedient to try to create a distraction from the underlying causes of existing social discontetn by blaming "foreign enemies" for the troubles of the state, not only does this not come to grips with the real social problems, which must be solved, at least partially, if further and more serious eruptions are to be avoided,but such "scapegoating" may create a state of affairs that is even worse than the one it tried to forestall.

DESIRE FOR POWER

Unfortunately it appears that what the Greek Theophrastus said many centuries ago is still largely true "the strongest desire of men who have attained to leadership in a popularly governed state is not so much the acquisition of personal wealth (though this may also be sought) as the gradual establishment of their own sovereignty at the expense of popular government". It is even more unfortunate that the Jamaican leaders have not realized, as Moskos has pointed out in his study of "The Sociology of Political Independence" that, without radical reform, the new nationalist leadership of the West Indies will be quite unable to fulfil the hopes of the earlier independence movements.

BIAFRA A GREEK TRAGEDY

By KENNEDY LINDSAY

The struggle between Biafra and Federal Nigeria brings to mind the "Protestant wind" which thwarted some of the best laid plans of France in her wars with England. Time after time, when success should have gone to Biafra, fate intervened and deprived her of it.

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The first blast of "Protestant wind" came almost immediately when through an unexpected combination of circumstances. Britain and the Soviet Union both began to build up the arms and equipment of the Federal Nigerian forces. This was a serious military reverse for Biafra, but equally a diplomatic one, for it limited Colonel Ojukwu's ability to gain recognition by exploiting cold war rivalries.

But this initial reverse was by no means decisive. Arms are not enough. There must also be political cohesion within a state and the will to wage war. Federal Nigeria appeared to have neither. On the eve of Biafra's secession Chief Obafemi Awolowo,the spokesman for the Yoruba Western Region had declared. "If the East [Biafra] goes, we goo too" and on the night before secession Colonel Ojukwu had 'phoned Colonel Adebayo, the military governor of the Western Region, and asked "Are you not for seceeding also?"

During those days the Federal Government was so weak it even agreed to the return of the Federal soldiers to their regions of origin which meant that there was hardly a soldier in the Western Region or the smaller Mid-West Region.

Time seemed to be on the side of Biafra and might even bring the disintegration of the Federation of Nigeria. But it is not in the nature of the Ibo of Biafra to wait. They resolved upon a bold and imagin ative plan to exploit the situation

The Yorubas are divided into Oyo-Ibadan Yorubas and Ijebu ones Under the civilian regime, the Oyo-Ibadan Chief Samuel Akintola had controlled the Western Region and had had great influence within the Federal Government. After the military takeover, Chief Awolowo of the Ijebu Yorubas became the

• Continued on Back Page

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No 3

A SERIOUS REVIEW

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Guyana: what prospect?

• From Page One

inherent in the behaviour of the political leadership, racial tensions burst to the fore in violent shock waves. More than that, the political parties incite the races to conflict by their racial bias and attitudes. While the racial tensions are even present in the society, the workers in industries like sugar and bauxite are being united, disciplined and organised by the cooperative form of the labour process necessitated by large-scale industry And as a result they are beginning to see that the real conflicts are not between the East Indians and the Negroes but between the workers and management. The conflict of the classes is beginning to be felt, but the racial tensions remain.

The Prime Minsiter in opening his Party's election campaign places on the list of achievements of his PNC, stability within the country, new roads and highways, industrial progress (there are many new buildings, but is that progress) and confidence in Guyana's future by indicated foreign capital investments and loans. For the things his government has not done and should have done, he blames the UF. What the PNC proposes to do? More stability, more roads, more foreign investments and loans, "Guyanization" of the sugar industry (more local faces on the local board of directors while the important decisions are made in London.) D'Aguiar, on the other hand, proposes to give all Guyanese what he has given to workers in his employ – higher wages. Dr. Jagan began by reaffirming his party's "Marxist-Lennist" "program". This is how they began. Two weeks before the elections that is the complex social situation in Guyana.

We cannot predict what will happen or what will not happen..But this much can be said: unless the "new" government begins to tackle the urgent and serious problems of the day and replace the politics of race and corruption by mass politics, the conflicts would heighten, the frustrations of the population will increase and before getting better get very much worse. Violence would be the order of the day after Dec. 16. If there are upheavals in Guyana, they are very likely to be violently suppressed.

The middle class has nothing to propose. They are now bankrupt having fulfilled their century old aspiration of filling the colonial positions left vacant by their former masters and enjoying the material rewards for services rendered. If violence is to be avoided or minimised, the immediate and urgent task is for the workers, the farmers and the youth in every department of the national life to organise to organise and to organise again . In every village, in every factory, in every school and university, on the docks, on the farms, in the slums, the task must be independent organisation of the people to discuss and act on their local problems. The only way Guyana and the Caribbean can get out of the mess we are in is by the independent organisation of the population at the local level so that out of this organisation can emerge a truly mass national movement. The task of all serious political-minded people and groups is to assist in this mass organisation of the population and to show a new direction for the building of a new way of life in the Caribbean. We will either rise to unexpected heights in democratic practice and government or sink to unimaginable depths in military brutality and suppression.

After Dec. 16, that will be the choice before the people of Guyana.

Biafra: a Greek tragedy

man of power in the Western Region and the most influential Yoruba in the Federation.

The Biafran plan was to use the dispossessed Akintolaites to destroy the Federation. The first step was to overrun the weak and partly Ibo inhabited Mid-West Region and to set up a puppet administration. The next step was to encourage a demand for secession by the dis-gruntled elements in the Western Region, and if necessary, to undertake a Biafran military occupation of the Region on the invitation of office-hungry Akintolaites. The third step was to have the Western and Mid-West Region declare themselves independent republics and finally to join them with Biafra in a loose Confederation of Southern Nigeria. Poorer and more backward northern Nigeria would be caught between the Confederation and the Sahara and would be forced to make what terms it could

The expeditionary force was named The Liberation Army and was placed under the command of one of the very few Yorubas with the Biafrans. It swiftly overran the Mid-West and set up a new administration. It then waited several days while the Biafran radio beamed exhortations to the Western Region. But neither Akintolaites nor any one else in the west responded.

Next came news that Federal troops were on the move. The Biafrans could wait no longer and the order was given to advance on the Western Region with the utmost speed.

Again the "Protestant wind" blew. As the Biafran troops sped through the night the leading jeep struck a tree. The vehicles immediately behind collided into it and into one another and ammunition exploded. More than sixty soldiers were killed and the road was blocked until long after daylight. But for this delay the Biafrans would have occupied the key road junction of Ore instead of a Federal detachment.

The battle for Ore was savage, but , as Federal reinforcements built up, the Biafrans were forced back. Then almost as swiftly as it had emerged the Army of Liberation withdrew into Biafra.

The Federal army had been caught off-balance and the adventure paid the Biafrans several military dividends. Politically it was a total and irretrievable disaster. The pre-secession massacres of Ibos had been mainly in Northern Nigeria and the Biafran planners had not grasped the extent to which Ibos were detested in other areas also. The Federation had been teetering on the brink of disintegration prior to the Biafran invasion. The invasion transformed the situation. The Western Region and Lagos, the Federal capital, were panic stricken. Overnight the Federal forces became the only hope against Ibo conquest.

General Gowan, the Federal Head of State, found himself with a solidly unified nation and the unity still holds. Colonel Ojukwu's second assumption that the Federation had neither the political stability nor the will to wage war had gone by the board.

Colonel Ojukwu's third assumption that Biafra would achieve international recognition had received an initial reverse when the Soviet Union as well as Britain sided with the Federation. But time, patience, and good fortune would probably have proved him right had not the "Protestant wind" blown once more.

The Federal army decided to seize the Southern area of Biafra which is inhabited from the sea near Calabar. The Biafrans were prepared for such an eventuality. Had they had one or two better placed telephones or radio transmitters the Federal landing would have become a Federal Gallipoli. A brief initial period of Biafran inactivity allowed the Federal troops to complete the critical manoeuver of establishing themselves on shore. Some of the Federal planners had doubted the wisdom of a major amphibious operation of that kind and had it been decisively repulsed there would have been no second attempt.

The Calabar invasion was a serious military reverse for Biafra, but once again the non-military consequences were even more serious. As the Federal army advanced across southern Biafra the great majority of the non-Ibo peoples who inhabit the area turned against the Ibos living in their midst and in other ways made it clear that they had small love for Ibos or Biafra.

For the first time the outside world came to realise that the true Biafra was limited to an area about the size of Jamaica. In it in peace time live between seven and eight million Ibos. It has a number of coal mines, very little oil, one or two textile factories, a brewery, some minor industries and an acute land shortage in its teeming villages. Further, in pre-secession days most of its industries depended upon Nigeria as a whole for their market.

As compassion for the sufferings of the Ibos mounted and admiration for their stubborness and resourcefulness increased, most foreign governments came under more and more pressure from their citizens to recognise Biafra. But even the more sympathetic governments hesitated ro recognise an over-crowded, landlocked fragment of territory which would have no hope of employment for a large proportion of its people and which would be dependent on the goodwill of Federal Nigeria for the passage of its exports and imports.

In addition, it would not even contain all of the Ibos. There would still be a further four or five million of them living in Federal Nigeria beyond the frontiers of Biafra.

Tanzania, Zambia, Gabon, and Ivory Coast have recognised Biafra. There has been no recognition from the states which matter most. Even France which has expressed strong sympathy for Biafra and is now supplying her surreptitiously with arms has not recognised her officially.

Thus each one of Colonel Ojukwu's three original assumptions has played him false and the industrious and intelligent Ibos of the former Eastern Region have gone from calamity to calamity like a destiny-doomed hero in a Greek tragedy.

Exit Norman

•Continued from front page

mitting himself to a referemdun which his own behaviour throughout the Federal negotiations had made it very unlikely that he could win. Taken together both these decisions landed him in a tangled web from which he was never subsequently able to extricate himself.

The first decision let loose a torrent of evils, among them Sir Grantley Adams who, on the evidence, must be regarded as not having been man enough for the Premiership of the West Indies. But that, too, was part and parcel of the situation created by Manley. Every objective assessment of Adams till then was that he was an able, astute and skilled politician. Almost every objective assessment after that has been that he was not. What is the explanation?

POLITICAL REALITIES

Politics is about realities. Polit ical acts that take no account of realities are not really political. Also, most political realities are about power. A Federation of the West Indies with primacy among the governments of the West Indies had been called into being. Whatever the powers of that Federation, it would be expected to speak for the West Indies on a number of crucial matters; no other single government could. The Federation needed leadership, and like all political organisms it needed legitimate leadership. This can be established in a variety of ways, including the bullet or the ballot box, but the end result must, within the limits of the means chosen,be legitimate.

In the West Indies in 1958, there was only one legitimate choice for the Federal Prime Ministership. That choice was not Adams; it was Manley. But he refused, and Adams was constrained to accept. Two essential qualities were needed for the job – belief in Federation, and a legitmiate claim to leadership of the entire West Indies. However, Manley came to possess both these qualities the fact was that he did. The job was his and no one else's.

Political power of that quality can neither be given away nor loaned. That this is what Manley attempted to do is now history. Manley believed that he could postpone going to the Federation for five years, and that is how long Adams had the job for – though, of course, Manley did not say so at the time. But there were two problems involved here. First of all, what would be the nature of the authority Adams would wield as caretaker; and secondly, what would be the manner of his going when the time came to go. In the West Indies, as elsewhere, an ex-Prime Minister with no prospect of another term in office is a hard man to place.

Immediately the arrangement was concluded the difficulties began to manifest themselves. One of the main difficulties was "back-seat driving." Once the possibility existed, one of two things had to be done. The man in the Federal seat had to take control or power nad to be devolved to the units not only by reason of size, wealth, population etc., but also because, in the most important of them, that is where legitimacy was.

The conflict between these forces made it difficult for the Federation to function smoothly. One may question Sir Grantley's choice of subjects on which to assert himself; but assert himself he had to do. The conflict also reflected itself at the Party level and was possibly one solid reason, among others, why the West Indian Federal Labour Party (WIFLP) failed to function. Where did the power lie? Manley was President of the Party but Adams was Prime Minister, a conflict of office and responsibility that did an untold amount of harm.

One might ask, too, what organization? It was becasue there was no Party organization that the problem of legitimate power loomed so large. If personal power were not to be legitimate,an organization had to be called into being. But on what basis, and to what end? Squabbling over the spoils created the wrong atmosphere for party organization. In addition, the party cupboard was ideologically bare, and remained so for the entire existence of the WIFLP.

Mr Norman Manley's decision to hold a referendum was the second fateful decision relating to the Federation. This was surely the crowning folly of the entire farce. Thereafter, Mr. Manley exploited the new circumstances created by the decision to have a referendum at first to his gain, but ultimately to the detriment of us all. It might well be that Manley did not call the rererendum to strengthen his bargaining position in the Eastern Caribbean"; the decision was perhaps too swift for such designing. But this hardly exonerates him. The decision to hold a referendum left unsettled questions like the timing of the referendum and the questions to be posed, and these were his alone to decide. But, having made the decision, Manley then became aware of the advantages for his negotiating position in delaying the referendum until the bargaining was done. Others, like the Federal Prime Minsiter,then sought to delay the negotiations. Ultimately the disenchantment created by the bitter wrangling over "vital" issues, made it difficult for the referendum to be won. Ultimately, too, it has made it difficult for Mr. Manley to end his political career with the flourish he would have liked. Pity. More than any other West Indian politician, he probably deserved to.

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